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ON RELIGIOUS REFORMATION.

TO THE RELIGIOUS PUBLIC.

The following documents are most respectfully submitted, for the purpose of obviating mistakes, and correcting erroneous statements, by presenting a precise and definite view of the religious reformation for which the author, with many others in these states, has, from and since the year 1809, been humbly and earnestly contending.

Having happened in eastern Virginia, as in many other places distant from our commencement, that various mistakes and discordant misrepresentations, injurious to the proposed reformation, have been unhappily indulged and officiously propagated, charging the reformers with a fickle unprincipled versatility; and the reformation with almost every thing deemed erroneous, it appears a duty we owe to ourselves, and to the public, in behalf of the all-important cause in which we are engaged, to give a public exhibit of the following well authenticated documents, which have been in the hands of the public from, and since, the date of our commencement to the present day; which, taken in connexion with our other public exhibitions of faith and duty, both from pulpit and press, we are persuaded, must and will exonerate both the reformers and the reformation from the above unfounded imputations; and also evince to every candid professor of Christianity, that the reformation, for which we humbly plead, is worthy of all acceptance—unexceptionably just and necessary, the very and immediate duty of all concerned for the glory of God, the enjoyment of his salvation, and the conversion of the world. Impressed with these sentiments, (the result of the rigorous investigation of upwards of twenty years, during which time the following specifications and assumptions, upon which the proposed reformation has been predicated, and in a strict undeviating conformity to which it has hitherto proceeded, have been subjected to the strictest scrutiny of objecting opposers of every description, without even the alleged detection of a single error; which, however, is not the alone ground of our confidence, which is more especially founded upon the materials of which these specifications and assumptions are composed, namely; express scripture testimony, undeniable facts, and universally acknowledged principles, which, we are persuaded, no rational professor of any sect *ever did, or can pretend*, to call in question,) we submit as follows:

At a meeting held on Buffaloe, Washington county, Pennsylvania, August 17, A. D. 1809, consisting of persons of different religious denominations, it was unanimously agreed, upon the considerations, and for the purposes hereinafter declared, to form themselves into a religious association, denominated The Christian Association of Washington; which they accordingly did, and appointed twenty-one of their number to meet and confer together; and, with the assistance of Mr. Thomas Campbell, minister of the Gospel, to determine upon the proper means to carry into effect the important object of their association; the result of which conference was the following Declaration and Address, drawn up by the aforesaid, agreed upon, and ordered to be printed at the expense, and for the benefit of the society, September 7th, 1809.

Foray Manuscript

DECLARATION OF CHRISTIAN RIGHTS.

From the series of events which have taken place in the churches for many years past, especially in this western country, as well as from what we know in general of the present state of things in the christian world, we are persuaded that it is high time for us not only to *think*, but also to *act* for ourselves; to see with our *own eyes*, and to take all our measures directly and immediately from the *divine standard*; to this alone we feel ourselves divinely bound to be conformed; as by this alone we must be judged. We are also persuaded, that as no man can be *judged* for his brother, so no man can *judge* for his brother: but that every man must be allowed to judge for himself, as every man must bear his own judgment, must give account of himself to God.—We are also of opinion, that as the divine word is equally binding upon all, so all lie under an equal obligation to be bound by *it*, and *it alone*; and not by any human interpretation of it: and, that therefore no man has a right to judge his brother, except in so far as he manifestly violates the express letter of the law. That every such judgment is an express violation of the law of Christ, a daring usurpation of his throne, and a gross intrusion upon the rights and liberties of his subjects. We are therefore of opinion that we should beware of such things; that we should keep at the utmost distance from every thing of this nature; and, that knowing the judgment of God against them that commit such things, we should neither do the same ourselves, nor have pleasure in them that do them. Moreover, being well aware, from sad experience, of the heinous nature, and pernicious tendency of religious controversy among Christians;—tired and sick of the bitter jarrings and janglings of a party spirit, we would desire to be at rest; and, were it possible, we would also desire to adopt and recommend such measures, as would give rest to our brethren throughout all the churches;—as would restore unity, peace, and purity, to the whole church of God. This desirable rest, however, we utterly despair either to find for ourselves, or to be able to recommend to our brethren, by continuing amidst the diversity and rancour of party contentions;—the veering uncertainty and lashings of human opinions: nor, indeed, can we reasonably expect to find it any where, but in Christ and his simple word; which is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Our desire, therefore, for ourselves and our brethren would be, that rejecting human opinions and the inventions of men, as of *any authority*, or as having *any place* in the church of God, we might forever cease from farther contentions about such things; returning to, and holding fast by, the original standard; taking the divine word alone for our rule—the Holy Spirit for our teacher and guide, to lead us into all truth—and Christ alone as exhibited in the word for our salvation;—that, by so doing, we may be at peace among ourselves, follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Impressed with these sentiments, we have resolved as follows:

(Here follow the first and fifth resolutions, as giving a distinct and full exhibition of the character and object of the society, and consequently of the reformation thence resulting.)

I. That we form ourselves into a religious association under the denomination of the Christian Association of Washington—for the sole purpose of promoting simple evangelical christianity, free from all mixture of human opinions and inventions of men.

V. That this society, formed for the sole purpose of promoting simple evangelical Christianity, shall, to the utmost of its power, countenance and support such ministers, and such only, as exhibit a manifest conformity to the original standard in conversation and doctrine, in zeal and diligence;—only such as reduce to practice that simple original form of Christianity, expressly exhibited upon the sacred page; without attempting to inculcate any thing of human authority, of private opinion, or inventions of men, as having any place in the constitution, faith, or worship, of the christian church—or any thing, as matter of christian faith or duty, for which there cannot be expressly produced a thus saith the Lord, either in express terms, or by approved precedent.

ADDRESS, &c.

To all that love our Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity, throughout all the Churches, the following Address is most respectfully submitted.

(Here follow such extracts out of said address, as are thought necessary and sufficient, at this time, to afford a satisfactory specimen of the spirit and tenor of the proposed reformation, and also of the principles upon which it is predicated.)

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

That it is the grand design, and native tendency of our holy religion, to reconcile and unite men to God, and to each other in truth and love, to the glory of God, and their own present and eternal good, will not, we presume, be denied, by any of the genuine subjects of Christianity. The nativity of its Divine Author was announced from heaven, by an host of angels, with high acclamations of "glory to God in the highest, and, on earth, peace and good will amongst men." The whole tenor of that divine book which contains its institutes, in all its gracious declarations, precepts, ordinances, and holy examples, most expressly and powerfully inculcates this. In so far, then, as this holy unity and unanimity in faith and love is attained, just in the same degree, is the glory of God, and the happiness of men, promoted and secured. Impressed with those sentiments, and at the same time grievously affected with those sad divisions, which have so awfully interfered with the benign and gracious intention of our holy religion, by exciting its professed subjects to bite and devour one another, we cannot suppose ourselves justifiable, in withholding our sincere, humble and earnest endeavours to heal and remove them.

Should we speak of competency, viewing the greatness of the object, and the manifold difficulties which lie in the way of its accomplishment, we would readily exclaim, with the apostle, who is sufficient for these things!—But, upon recollecting ourselves, neither would *we* be discouraged; persuaded with *him* that, as *the work* in which *we* are engaged, so likewise *our* sufficiency, is of God. But after all, both the mighty and the many are with us. The Lord himself, and all that are truly his people, are declarately on our side. The prayers of all the churches, nay, the prayers of Christ himself, John 17, 20, 23, and of all that have ascended to his heavenly kingdom, are with us. The blessing out of Zion is pronounced upon our undertaking. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee." With such encouragements as these, what should deter us from the heavenly enterprise, or render hopeless the attempt of accomplishing, in due time, an entire union of all christians in faith and practice, according to the word of God? Not that we judge ourselves competent to effect such a thing; we utterly disclaim the thought; but we judge it our bounden duty to make the attempt, by using all due means in our power to promote it; and also, that we have sufficient reason to rest assured that our humble and well-meant endeavours, shall not be in vain in the Lord.

The cause that we advocate is not our own peculiar, nor the cause of any party, considered as such; it is a common cause, the cause of Christ and our brethren of all denominations. All that we presume, then, is to do, what we humbly conceive to be *our* duty, in connexion with our brethren; to each of whom it equally belongs, as to us, to exert themselves for this blessed purpose. And as we have no just reason to doubt the concurrence of our brethren, to accomplish an object so desirable in itself, and fraught with such happy consequences; so neither can we look forward to that happy event, which will forever put an end to our hapless divisions, and restore to the church its primitive unity, purity and prosperity, but in the pleasing prospect of their hearty and dutiful concurrence.

Dearly beloved brethren, why should *we* deem it a thing incredible, that the church of Christ, in this highly favoured country, should resume that original unity, peace, and purity, which belongs to its constitution, and constitutes its glory? Or, is there any thing that can be justly deemed necessary for this desirable purpose, but to conform to the model, and adopt the practice of the primitive church, expressly exhibited in the New Testament? Whatever alterations this might pro-

duce in any or all of the churches, should, we think, neither be deemed inadmissible nor ineligible. Surely, such alteration would be every way for the better, and not for the worse; unless we should suppose the divinely inspired rule to be faulty, or defective. Were we, then, in our church constitution and managements, to exhibit a complete conformity to the apostolick church, would we not be, in that respect, as perfect as Christ intended we should be? And should not this suffice us?

It is, to us a pleasing consideration, that all the churches of Christ, which mutually acknowledge each other as such, are not only agreed in the great doctrines of faith and holiness, but are also materially agreed, as to the positive ordinances of Gospel institution; so that our differences, at most, are about the things in which the kingdom of God does not consist, that is, about matters of private opinion, or human invention. What a pity, that the kingdom of God should be divided about such things!! Who, then, would not be the first amongst us, to give up with human inventions in the worship of God; and to cease from imposing his private opinions upon his brethren; that our breaches might *thus* be healed? Who would not willingly conform to the original pattern laid down in the New Testament, for *this happy purpose*? Our dear brethren, of all denominations, will please to consider, that we have our educational prejudices, and particular customs to struggle with as well as they. But this we do sincerely declare, that there is nothing we have hitherto received as matter of faith or practice, which is not expressly taught and enjoined in the word of God, either in express terms, or approved precedent, that we would not heartily relinquish, that so we might return to the original constitutional unity of the christian church; and, in this happy unity, enjoy full communion with all our brethren, in peace and charity. The like dutiful condescension, we candidly expect of all, that are seriously impressed with a sense of the duty they owe to God, to each other, and to their perishing fellow-brethren of mankind. To this we call, we invite our brethren of all denominations, by all the sacred motives which we have avouched, as the impulsive reasons of our thus addressing them.

You are all, dear brethren, equally included as the objects of our love and esteem. With you all we desire to unite in the bonds of an entire christian unity—Christ alone being the head, the centre, his word the rule—an explicit belief of, and manifest conformity to it in all things—the *terms*. More than this you will not require of us; and less we cannot require of you; nor, indeed, can we reasonably suppose any would desire it; for what good purpose would it serve? We dare neither assume nor propose the trite indefinite distinction between essentials and non-essentials, in matters of revealed truth and duty; firmly persuaded, that, whatever may be their comparative importance, simply considered, the high obligation of the Divine Authority revealing or enjoining them, renders the belief or performance of them, abundantly essential to us, in as far as we know them. And to be ignorant of any thing God has revealed, can neither be our duty, nor our privilege. We humbly presume then, dear brethren, you can have no relevant objection to meet us upon this ground. And, we again beseech you, let it be none that it is the invitation but of a few; by your accession we shall be many; and whether few or many, in the first instance, it is all one with respect to the event, which must ultimately await the full information and hearty concurrence of all. Besides, whatever is to be done, must begin—sometime—somewhere; and no matter where, or by whom; if the Lord puts his hand to the work, it must surely prosper. And has he not been graciously pleased, upon many signal occasions, to bring to pass the greatest events from very small beginnings, and even by means the most unlikely? Duty then, is *ours*; but events belong to *God*.

Are we not all praying for that happy event, when there shall be but one fold, as there is but one chief Shepherd? What! shall we pray for a thing, and not strive to obtain it!—not use the necessary means to have it accomplished!! What said the Lord to Moses upon a piece of conduct somewhat similar? “Why criest thou unto me? Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward, *but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand.*” Let the ministers of Jesus but embrace this exhortation, put their hand to the work, and encourage the people to go forward upon the firm ground of obvious truth, to unite in the bonds of an entire Christian unity; and who will venture to say, that it would not soon be accomplished? “Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people,” saith your God. To you, therefore, it peculiarly belongs, as the professed and acknowledged leaders of the people, to go before them in this good work—to

remove human opinions and the inventions of men out of the way, by carefully separating this chaff from the pure wheat of primary and authentic revelation; casting out that assumed authority, that enacting and decreeing power, by which those things have been imposed and established. To the ministerial department, then, do we look with anxiety. *Ministers of Jesus*, ye can neither be ignorant of, nor unaffected with, the divisions and corruptions of his church. His dying commands, his last and ardent prayers for the visible unity of his professing people, will not suffer *you* to be indifferent in this matter. *You will not, you cannot*, therefore, be silent upon a subject of such vast importance to his personal glory, and the happiness of his people—*consistently* you cannot, for *silence gives consent*. You will rather lift up your voice like a trumpet, to expose the heinous nature and dreadful consequences of those unnatural anti-christian divisions, which have so rent and ruined the church of God. Thus, in justice to your station and character, honored of the Lord, would we hopefully anticipate your zealous and faithful efforts, to heal the breaches of Zion, that God's dear children might dwell together in unity and love—But if otherwise—* * * we forbear to utter it. See Mal. ii. 1-10.

Oh! that ministers and people would but consider, that there are no divisions in the grave, nor in that world which lies beyond it! There our divisions must come to an end! We must all unite there! Would to God, we could find in our hearts to put an end to our short-lived divisions here, that so we might leave a blessing behind us; even a happy and united church. What gratification, what utility, in the mean time, can our divisions afford to ministers or people? Should they be perpetuated till the Day of Judgment, would they convert one sinner from the error of his ways, or save a soul from death? Have they any tendency to hide the multitude of sins, that are so dishonorable to God, and hurtful to his people? Do they not rather irritate and produce them? How innumerable and highly aggravated are the sins they have produced, and are at this day producing, both amongst professors and profane. We entreat, we beseech you then, dear brethren, by all those considerations, to concur in this blessed and dutiful attempt.—What is the work of all, must be done by all. Such was the work of the tabernacle in the wilderness. Such is the work to which you are called—not by the authority of man—but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead. By this authority are you called to raise up the tabernacle of David, that is fallen down amongst us; and to set it up upon its own base. This you cannot do, while you run every man to his own house, and consult only the interests of his own party. Till you associate, consult and advise together; and in a friendly and christian manner explore the subject, nothing can be done. We would, therefore, with all due deference and submission, call the attention of our brethren to the obvious and important duty of co-operation. Unite with us in the common cause of simple evangelical Christianity—In this glorious cause we are ready to unite with you—United we shall prevail. It is the cause of Christ, and of our brethren throughout all the churches, of Catholic unity, peace and purity—a cause that must finally prosper in spite of all opposition. Let us unite to promote it. Come forward then, dear brethren, and help with us. Do not suffer yourselves to be lulled asleep by that syren song of the slothful and reluctant professor, “The time is not yet come—the time is not come, saith he—the time that the Lord's house should be built.” Believe him not.* Is it time for us to sit still in our corruptions and divisions, when the Lord, by his word and providence, is so loudly and expressly calling us to repentance and reformation? “Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust, O Jerusalem; arise, loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion”—Resume that precious—that dear-bought liberty—wherewith Christ has made his people free; a liberty from subjection to any authority but his own, in matters of religion. Call no man father, no man master upon earth; for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. Stand fast, therefore, in this precious liberty, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. For the vindication of this precious liberty have we declared ourselves hearty and willing advocates. For this benign and dutiful purpose have we associated, that by so doing, we might contribute the mite of our humble endeavours to promote it, and thus invite our brethren to do the same. As the first fruits of our efforts for this blessed purpose, we respectfully present to their consideration the following propositions—relying upon their charity and candour, that they will

neither despise nor misconstrue our humble and adventurous attempt. If they should in any measure serve, as a preliminary, to open up the way to a permanent scriptural unity amongst the friends and lovers of truth and peace throughout the churches, we shall greatly rejoice at it. We by no means pretend to dictate: and could we propose any thing more evident, consistent and adequate, it should be at their service. Their pious and dutiful attention to an object of such magnitude, will induce them to communicate to us their emendations; and thus what is sown in weakness, will be raised up in power. ^x In a matter, therefore, of such confessed importance, our christian brethren, however unhappily distinguished by party names, will not, cannot withhold their helping hand. We are as heartily willing to be their debtors, as they are indispensably bound to be our benefactors. Come, then, dear brethren, we most humbly beseech you, cause your light to shine upon our weak beginnings, that we may see to work by it. Evince your zeal for the glory of Christ, and the spiritual welfare of your fellow-christians, by your hearty and zealous co-operation to promote the unity, purity and prosperity of his church.

Let none imagine that the subjoined propositions are at all intended as an overture towards a new creed, or standard, for the church; or, as in any wise designed to be made a term of communion; nothing can be farther from our intention. They are merely designed for opening up the way, that we may come fairly and firmly to original ground upon clear and certain premises: and take up things just as the apostles left them. That thus disentangled from the accruing embarrassments of intervening ages, we may stand with evidence upon the same ground on which the church stood at the beginning. Having said so much to solicit attention and prevent mistake, we submit as follows:

PROP. 1. That the church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those, in every place, that profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him in all things according to the scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and of none else, as none else can be truly and properly called Christians.

2. That although the church of Christ upon earth must necessarily exist in particular and distinct societies, locally separate one from another; yet there ought to be no schisms,—no uncharitable divisions among them. They ought to receive each other as Christ Jesus has also received them to the glory of God. And, for this purpose, they ought all to walk by the same rule, to mind and speak the same thing; and to be perfectly united in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

3. That in order to this, nothing ought to be inculcated upon christians as articles of faith; nor required of them as terms of communion; but what is expressly taught, and enjoined upon them in the word of God. Nor ought any thing be admitted, as of divine obligation in their church constitution and managements, but what is expressly enjoined by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles upon the New Testament church; either in express terms, or by approved precedent.

4. That although the scriptures of the Old and New Testament are inseparably connected, making together but one perfect and entire revelation of the Divine will, for the edification and salvation of the church; and, therefore, in that respect cannot be separated; yet as to what directly and properly belongs to their immediate object, the New Testament is as perfect a constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the New Testament church, and as perfect a rule for the particular duties of its members, as the Old Testament was for the worship, discipline, and government of the Old Testament church, and the particular duties of its members.

7. That although doctrinal exhibitions of the great system of divine truth, and defensive testimonies in opposition to prevailing errors, be highly expedient; and the more full and explicit they be for those purposes, the better; yet, as these must be in a great measure the effect of human reasoning, and, of course, must contain many inferential truths, they ought not to be made terms of Christian communion: unless we suppose, what is contrary to fact, that none have a right to the communion of the church, but such as possess a very clear and decisive judgment; or are come to a very high degree of doctrinal information; whereas the church from the beginning did, and ever will consist of little children, and young men, as well as fathers.

8. That as it is not necessary that persons should have a particular knowledge, or distinct apprehension of all divinely revealed truth, in order to entitle them to a place in the church; neither should they, for this purpose, be required to make a

profession more extensive than their knowledge: but that, on the contrary, their having a due measure of scriptural self-knowledge, respecting their lost and perishing condition by nature and practice, and of the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, accompanied with a profession of their faith in, and obedience to him in all things according to his word, is all that is absolutely necessary to qualify them for admission into his church.

9. That all that are enabled, through grace, to make such a profession, and to manifest the reality of it in their tempers and conduct, should consider each other as the precious saints of God, should love each other as brethren, children of the same family and father, temples of the same spirit, members of the same body, subjects of the same grace, objects of the same divine love, bought with the same price, and joint heirs of the same inheritance. Whom God hath thus joined together no man should dare to put asunder.

10. That division among christians is a horrid evil, fraught with many evils. It is anti-christian, as it destroys the visible unity of the body of Christ, as if he were divided against himself, excluding and excommunicating a part of himself. It is anti-scriptural, as being strictly prohibited by his sovereign authority—a direct violation of his express command. It is anti-natural, as it excites christians to contemn, to hate and oppose one another, who are bound by the highest and most endearing obligations to love each other as brethren, even as Christ has loved them. In a word, it is productive of confusion, and of every evil work.

11. That, (in some instances,) a partial neglect of the expressly revealed will of God; and, (in others,) an assumed authority for making the approbation of human opinions, and human inventions, a term of communion, by introducing them into the constitution, faith, or worship of the church; are, and have been, the immediate, obvious, and universally acknowledged causes of all the corruptions and divisions, that ever have taken place in the church of God.

12. That all that is necessary to the highest state of perfection and purity of the church upon earth is; first, that none be received as members, but such as having that due measure of scriptural self-knowledge described above, do profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the scriptures; nor 2dly, that any be retained in her communion longer than they continue to manifest the reality of their profession by their tempers and conduct; 3dly, that her ministers, duly and scripturally qualified, inculcate none other things than those very articles of faith and holiness expressly revealed and enjoined in the word of God: Lastly, that in all their administrations they keep close by the observance of all divine ordinances, after the example of the primitive church, exhibited in the New Testament; without any additions, whatsoever, of human opinions or inventions of men.

From the nature and construction of these propositions, it will evidently appear that they are laid in a designed subserviency to the declared end of our association, and are exhibited for the express purpose of performing a duty of previous necessity—a duty loudly called for in existing circumstances at the hand of every one, that would desire to promote the interests of Zion—a duty not only enjoined, as has been already observed from Is. lvii. 14, but which is also there predicted of the faithful remnant, as a thing in which they would voluntarily engage. "He that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain; and shall say, cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way; take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people." To prepare the way then for a permanent scriptural unity amongst Christians, by calling up to their consideration fundamental truths, directing their attention to first principles, clearing the way before them by removing the stumbling blocks—the rubbish of ages which has been thrown upon it, and fencing it on each side, that in advancing towards the desired object, they may not miss the way through mistake or inadvertency, by turning aside to the right hand or to the left—is, at least, the sincere intention of the above propositions. It remains with our brethren, now to say, how far they go towards answering this intention. Do they exhibit truths demonstrably evident in the light of scripture and right reason; so that to deny any part of them the contrary assertion would be manifestly absurd and inadmissible? Considered as a preliminary for the above purpose, are they adequate; so that if acted upon, they would infallibly lead to the desired issue? If evidently defective in either of these respects, let them be corrected and amended, till they become sufficiently evident, adequate and unexceptionable. In the mean time let them be examined with rigor, with all the rigor that justice, candour and charity will admit. If we have mistaken the way,

we shall be glad to be set right; but if, in the mean time, we have been happily led to suggest obvious and undeniable truths, which if adopted and acted upon, would infallibly lead to the desired unity, and secure it when obtained; we hope it will be no objection, that they have not proceeded from a general council. It is not the voice of the multitude, but the voice of truth, that has power with the conscience—that can produce rational conviction and acceptable obedience. A conscience that awaits the decision of the multitude—that hangs in suspense for the casting vote of the majority, is a fit subject for the man of sin. This we are persuaded is the uniform sentiment of real christians of every denomination. Would to God that all professors were such—then should our eyes soon behold the prosperity of Zion; we should soon see Jerusalem a quiet habitation. Union in truth has been, and ever must be, the desire and prayer of all such—Union in Truth is our motto. The Divine Word is our Standard; in the Lord's name do we display our banners. Our eyes are upon the promises; "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun." When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Our humble desire is to be *his standard bearers*—to fight under *his banner*, and with *his weapons*, "which are not carnal; but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;" even all the strong holds of division, those partition walls of separation; which, like the walls of Jericho, have been built up, as it were, to the very heavens, to separate God's people—to divide *his flock*—and so to prevent them from entering into their promised rest, at least in as far as respects this world. An enemy has done this, but he shall not finally prevail; "for the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." And the kingdom and dominion, even the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, and they shall possess it forever." But this cannot be in their present broken and divided state; "for a kingdom, or an house, divided against itself cannot stand, but comes to desolation." Now this has been the case with the church for a long time. However, "the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his heritage; but judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it." To all such, and such alone, are our expectations directed. Come, then, ye blessed of the Lord, we have your prayers, let us also have your actual assistance. What! shall we pray for a thing and not strive to obtain it!

You lovers of Jesus, and beloved of him, however scattered in this cloudy and dark day, you love the truth as it is in Jesus, (if our hearts deceive us not) so do we. You desire union in Christ with all them that love him; so do we. You lament and bewail our sad divisions; so do we. You reject the doctrines and commandments of men, that you may keep the law of Christ; so do we. You believe the alone sufficiency of his word; so do we. You believe that the word itself ought to be our rule, and not any human explication of it; so do we. You believe that no man has a right to judge, to exclude, or reject his professing christian brother; except in so far as he stands condemned or rejected, by the express letter of the law—so do we. You believe that the great fundamental law of unity and love ought not to be violated, to make way for exalting human opinions to an equality with express revelation, by making them articles of faith and terms of communion; so do we. You sincere and impartial followers of Jesus, friends of truth and peace, we dare not, we cannot think otherwise of you; it would be doing violence to your character; it would be inconsistent with your prayers and profession, so to do. We shall, therefore, have *your* hearty concurrence. But if any of our dear brethren, from whom we should expect better things, should, through weakness or prejudice, be in any thing otherwise minded, than we have ventured to suppose; we charitably hope, that, in due time, God will reveal even this unto them:—Only let such, neither refuse to come to the light; nor yet, through prejudice, reject it, when it shines upon them. Let them rather seriously consider, what we have thus most seriously and respectfully submitted to their consideration; weigh every sentiment in the balance of the sanctuary, as in the sight of God, with earnest prayer for, and humble reliance upon *his spirit*; and not in the spirit of self-sufficiency and party zeal; and, in so doing, we rest assured, the consequence will be happy, both for their own, and the church's peace. Let none imagine, that in so saying, we arrogate to ourselves a degree of intelligence superior to our brethren, much less superior to mistake: so far from this, our confidence is entirely founded upon the *express scripture* and *matter of fact evidence* of the things referred to; which may, ne-

vertheless, through inattention, or prejudice, fail to produce their proper effect;—as has been the case, with respect to some of the most evident truths, in a thousand instances. But charity thinketh no evil: and we are far from surmising, though we thus speak. To warn, even against *possible* evils, is certainly no breach of charity—as to be *confident* of the *certainly* of *some things*, is no just argument of presumption. We by no means claim the approbation of our brethren, as to any thing we have suggested for promoting the sacred cause of christian unity, farther than it carries its own evidence along with it: but we humbly claim a fair investigation of the subject; and solicit the assistance of our brethren for carrying into effect what we have thus weakly attempted. It is our consolation, in the mean time, that the desired event, as *certain* as it will be *happy* and *glorious*, admits of *no dispute*; however we may hesitate, or differ, about the proper means of promoting it. All we shall venture to say as to this, is, that we trust we have taken the proper ground; at least, if we have not, we despair of finding it elsewhere.—For, if holding fast in profession and practice whatever is expressly revealed and enjoined in the divine standard, does not, under the promised influence of the divine spirit, prove an adequate basis for promoting and maintaining unity, peace, and purity, we utterly despair of attaining those invaluable privileges, by adopting the standard of any party. To advocate the cause of unity while espousing the interests of a party would appear ABSURD. Nay, it would be adopting the very means, by which the bewildered church has, for hundreds of years past, been rending and dividing herself into fractions, for Christ's sake, and for the truth's sake; though the first and foundation truth of our Christianity is union with him; and the very next to it in order, union with each other in him;—"that we receive each other, as Christ has also received us, to the glory of God." For this is his commandment that we believe in his son Jesus Christ, and love another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him—and hereby we know that he dwelleth in us, by the spirit which he hath given us,"—even the spirit of faith, and of love, and of a sound mind. And surely this should suffice us. But how to love, and receive our brother, as we believe and hope Christ has received both him and us, and yet refuse to hold communion with them, is, we confess, a mystery too deep for us. If this be the way that Christ hath received us, then woe is to us. (We do not here intend a professed brother transgressing the express letter of the law, and refusing to be reclaimed. Whatever may be our charity in such a case, we have not sufficient evidence that Christ hath received him, or that he hath received Christ as his teacher and Lord.) To adopt means, then, apparently subversive of the very end proposed—means which the experience of ages has evinced successful only in overthrowing the visible interests of Christianity, in counteracting, as far as possible, the declared intention, the express command of its Divine Author, would appear in no wise a prudent measure for removing and preventing those evils. To maintain unity and purity has always been the plausible pretence of the compilers and abettors of human systems; and we believe in many instances their sincere intention; but have they at all answered the end? Confessedly, demonstrably they have not—no, not even in the several parties which have most strictly adopted them—much less to the catholic professing body. Instead of her catholic constitutional unity and purity, what does the church present us with, at this day, but a catalogue of sects and sectarian systems; each binding its respective party by the most sacred and solemn engagements, to continue as it is to the end of the world; at least this is confessedly the case with many of them. What a sorry substitute these, for Christian unity and love.

Our Lord says, Math. xviii. 7, woe unto the world because of offences. Scott, in his excellent work, lately published in this country, called his Family Bible, observes, in his notes upon this place, "that our Lord here intends all these evils within the church, which prejudice men's minds against his religion, or any doctrines of it. The scandalous lives, horrible oppressions, cruelties and iniquities of men called Christians; their divisions and bloody contentions; their idolatries and superstitions are, at this day, the *great offences* and *causes of stumbling* to Jews, Mahometans and Pagans, in all the four quarters of the globe; and they furnish infidels of every description with their most dangerous weapons against the truth. The acrimonious controversies agitated amongst those who agree in the principal doctrines of the gospel, and their mutual contempt and revilings of each other, together with the extravagant notions and wicked practices found among them,

form the grand prejudice in the minds of multitudes against evangelical religion, and harden the hearts of hereticks, pharisees, disguised infidels and careless sinners, against the truths of the gospel. In these and numberless other ways, it may be said, 'woe be to the world because of offences,' for the devil, the sower of these tares, makes use of them in deceiving the nations of the earth, and in murdering the souls of men. In the present state of human nature, it must needs be, that such offences should intervene; and God has wise and righteous reasons for permitting them; yet we should consider it as the greatest of evils, to be accessary to the destruction of souls; and an awful woe is denounced against every one, whose delusions or crimes thus stumble men, and set them against the only method of salvation." We conclude with an extract from the Boston Anthology, which, with too many of the same kind that might be adduced, furnish a mournful comment upon the text—we mean, upon the sorrowful subject of our woeful divisions and corruptions. The following reply to the Rev. Mr. Cram, missionary from Massachusetts to the Senecas, was made by the principal chiefs and warriors of the Six Nations, in council assembled, at Buffalo creek, state of New York, in the presence of the agent of the United States for indian affairs, in the summer of 1805. "I am come, brethren," said the missionary, "to enlighten your minds, and to instruct you how to worship the Great Spirit agreeably to his will, and to preach to you the gospel of his son Jesus Christ. There is but one way to serve God, and if you do not embrace the right way, you cannot be happy hereafter." To which they reply, "Brother, we understand that your religion is written in a book. You say that there is but one way to worship and serve the Great Spirit. If there be but one religion, why do you white people differ so much about it? Why not all agree, as you can all read the book? Brother, we do not understand these things. We are told your religion was given to your forefathers. We also have a religion which was given to our forefathers. It teaches us to be *thankful* for all the favors we receive—to *love* one another, and to be *united*. We never quarrel about religion. We are told you have been preaching to the white people in this place. Those people are our neighbors: we are acquainted with them. We will wait a little, to see what effect your preaching has upon *them*. If we find it does them good, makes them *honest*, and *less* disposed to cheat Indians, we will then consider again of what you have said." Thus closed the conference! Alas! poor people! how do our divisions and corruptions stand in your way? What a pity that you find us not upon original ground, such as the apostles left the primitive churches! Had we but exhibited to you their unity and charity; their humble, honest and affectionate deportment towards each other, and towards all men, you would not have had those evil and shameful things to object to our holy religion, and to prejudice your minds against it. But your conversion, it seems, awaits our reformation—awaits our return to primitive unity and love. To this may the God of mercy speedily restore us, both for your sakes and our own; that *his way* may be known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Amen and amen.

The following document published in Cincinnati, May 1829, is hereunto subjoined, not only for the sake of precision, that the public might have a clear, precise, circumscriptive view of the reason, principle, means, and object of the proposed reformation, but more especially, that its undeviating sameness and entire consistency with the proposition and object of the above declaration and address of 1809, might be manifestly apparent, to the complete refutation of the vague defamatory impeachment, of a fickle unprincipled versatility on the part of the reformers, to the manifest injury of the sacred cause in which they are engaged.

TO THE RELIGIOUS PUBLIC.

The following queries, for the purpose of promoting a genuine Scriptural reformation amongst the sincere professors of Christianity, are respectfully submitted to their consideration :

1. Is not the christian community in a sectarian condition, existing in separate communities alienated from each other ?
2. Is not such a condition the native and necessary result of corruption ; that is, of the introduction of human opinions into the constitution, faith, or worship, of christian societies ?
- ③. Is not such a state of corruption and division anti-natural, anti-rational, anti-christian ?
4. Is it not the common duty and interest of all concerned, especially of the teachers, to put an end to this destructive anti-scriptural condition ?
5. Can this be accomplished by continuing to proceed as hitherto ; that is, by maintaining and defending each his favorite system of opinion and practice.
6. If not, how is it to be attempted and accomplished, but by returning to the original standard and platform of christianity, expressly exhibited on the sacred page of New Testament scripture ?
7. Would not a strict and faithful adherence to this, by preaching and teaching precisely what the apostles preached and taught, for the faith and obedience of the primitive disciples, be absolutely, and to all intents and purposes, sufficient for producing all the benign and blissful intentions of the christian institution ?
8. Do not all these intentions terminate in producing the faith and obedience, that justifies and sanctifies the believing and obedient subject ?
9. Is not every thing necessary for the justification and sanctification of the believing and obedient, expressly taught and enjoined by the apostles in the execution of their commission for the conversion and salvation of the nations ; and fully recorded in the New Testament ?
10. If so, what more is necessary, but that we expressly teach, believe and obey, what we find expressly recorded for these purposes ? And would not our so doing, happily terminate our unhappy, scandalous, and destructive divisions ?
- N. B. The two following queries are subjoined for the sake of a clear definition of the leading and comprehensive terms, viz : *faith* and *obedience*—which comprehend the whole of the christian religion.
11. Are not law and obedience, testimony and faith relative terms, so that neither of the latter can exist without the former ? that is, where there is no law, there can be no obedience ; where there is no testimony, there can be no faith.
12. Again, is not testimony necessarily confined to facts, and law to authority, so that without the latter, the former cannot be ? that is, where there are no facts, there can be no testimony—where no authority—no law. Wherefore, in every case, faith must necessarily consist in the belief of facts ; and obedience in a practical compliance with the expressed will or dictate of authority. N. B. By facts is here meant some things said or done.

CONCLUSION.

Upon the whole, these things being so, it necessarily follows, that christianity, being entirely a divine institution, there can be nothing human in it ; consequently it has nothing to do with the doctrines and commandments of men ; but simply and solely with the belief and obedience of the expressly recorded testimony and will of God, contained in the Holy Scriptures, and enjoined by the authority of the Saviour and his holy apostles upon the christian community.

REFLECTIONS.

The affirmative of each of the above propositions being, as we presume, evidently true, they most certainly demand the prompt and immediate attention of all the serious professors of christianity, of every name. The awful denunciations and providential indications of the divine displeasure against the present anti-christian state of christendom, loudly call for reformation;—the personal and social happiness of all concerned, and the conversion of the unbelieving part of mankind equally demand it. Nevertheless, we are not authorized to expect, that any party, as such, will be induced by the above considerations, or by any other that can possibly be suggested, spontaneously and heartily to engage in the work of self-reformation. The sincere and upright in heart, however, ought not to be discouraged at the inattention and obstinacy of their brethren; for had this been the case in times past, no reformation had ever been effected. It becomes, therefore, the immediate duty and privilege of all that perceive and feel the necessity of the proposed reformation, to exert themselves by every scriptural means to promote it. Seeing the pernicious nature, and anti-scriptural effects of the present corruptions of christianity, both upon professors, and non-professors, in producing alienations amongst the former, in direct opposition to the law of Christ;—and in casting almost insuperable obstacles in the way of the conversion of the latter;—the serious and upright, of all parties, must feel conscientiously bound to endeavor, to the utmost of their power, to effect a genuine and radical reformation; which, we presume, can only be effected by a sincere conformity to the original exhibition of our holy religion, the divinely authorized rule and standard of faith and practice. To such, therefore, we appeal; and for the consideration of such alone, we have respectfully submitted the above queries.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” Paul, 1, Cor. i. 10.

“Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said; Father—I pray—for them who shall believe on me through the word of my apostles: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me:—that the world may know that thou hast sent me; and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.” John, 17.

“In vain do they worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”—Christ.

“From the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, saith the Lord of hosts.”—Mal. 3, 7.

“Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”—Rev. xviii. 4.

“He that testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so come.”—Lord Jesus.

WE CLOSE THESE DOCUMENTS WITH THE FOLLOWING EXTRACTS:

1. From the *Millennial Harbinger* of 1831, No. 12, pp. 567-8.
2. *Calvin's Institutes*, B. 4, ch. 10.
3. *Dr. Worcester's Letters to Christians*.

The last year has been a very interesting one in the history of this reformation. The great principles, called the first principles of christianity, and the great items in this reformation have been canvassed with more scrutiny, severity, and interest than ever before. A greater variety of talent has been displayed in the opposition, and the strength of the opponents of reform has been more fully developed.

— There is no sect in christendom that has less cause to oppose us than the Regular Baptists.

They say Christ's kingdom is not of this world; and so say we. They say that immersion is an ordinance of Jesus Christ; and so say we. They say it is a seal to a believing subject of all the blessings of the New Institution; and so say we. They say that the Lord's day and the Lord's supper should be regarded according to the *New Testament*, because ordinances of it; and so say we. They say that faith, repentance, immersion, and the Holy Spirit, are all necessary to constitute a christian; and so say we. They say that men must be born again before they can enter into the kingdom of heaven; that without holiness no man shall see the

Lord, and that unless the heart is changed to hate sin and love holiness, no man is to be regarded as a christian; and so say we. They say that the blood of Jesus Christ alone cleanses men from sin, and that no man can come to the Father but by Jesus Christ; and so we preach. And what is the controversy about? Because of not living according to, and carrying out these principles, and because, in numerous instances, they have made them of non-effect by their traditions.

“———This power is now to be examined, whether the church has authority to make laws which shall bind the consciences of men.”

“They must acknowledge Christ their Deliverer, as their only King, and must be governed by one law of liberty, even the sacred word of the gospel, if they wish to retain the grace which they once obtained in Christ: they must submit to no slavery: they must be fettered by no bonds.”

“VII. Every thing pertaining to the perfect rule of a holy life, the Lord hath comprehended in his law, so that there remains nothing for men to add to that summary. And he hath done this, first, that, since all rectitude of life consists in the conformity of all our actions to his will, as their standard, we might consider him as the sole master and director of our conduct; and secondly, to show that he requires of us nothing more than obedience. For this reason, James says, ‘He that judgeth his brother, judgeth the law; but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy.’ We hear that God asserts this as his peculiar and exclusive prerogative; to govern us by the empire and laws of his word. And the same sentiment had before been expressed by Isaiah, though in terms not quite so explicit: ‘The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King, He will save us.’ Both passages imply, that He who has authority over the soul, is the arbiter of life and death; and James even clearly expresses it. No man can assume this to himself. It follows, therefore, that God ought to be acknowledged as the only King of souls, who alone has power to save and to destroy; or, in the language of Isaiah, as the King, Judge, Legislator, and Saviour. Wherefore, Peter, when he admonishes pastors of their duty, exhorts them ‘to feed the flock, not as being lords over God’s heritage,’ or the company of the faithful. If we duly consider this point, that it is not lawful to transfer to man that which God appropriates solely to himself, we shall understand that this cuts off all the power which is claimed by those who wish to exalt themselves to command any thing in the church, unsanctioned by the word of God.”

“With regard to the present argument, if stripping off all false disguises, we confine our attention to what ought to be our chief concern, and involves our highest interests, namely, what kind of a Church Christ requires, in order that we may conform ourselves to its standard; it will be sufficiently evident to us, that the name of the Church does not belong to those who overleap all the limits of the word of God, and exercise an unbounded license of enacting new laws. For, does not that law, which was once given to the Church, remain forever in force? ‘What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.’ And again; ‘Add not thou unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.’ Since they cannot deny these things to have been spoken to the Church, do they not declare the rebellion of the Church, when they pretend that notwithstanding such prohibitions, it has dared to mingle additions of its own with the doctrine of God? Far be it from us, however, to countenance their falsehoods, by which they do so great an injury to the Church; let us know that the assumption of the name of the Church is a false pretense in all who are so carried away by the violence of human presumption, as to disregard all the restraints of the word of God, and to introduce a torrent of their own inventions. There is nothing involved, nothing intricate, nothing ambiguous in these words, by which the whole Church is forbidden to add any thing to the word, or to diminish any thing from it, in any question relating to the worship of God and his salutary precepts. But it will be alledged, that this was spoken exclusively of the law which has been succeeded by the propheties, and the whole dispensation of the gospel. This, I certainly admit, and at the same time assert, that these were accomplishments of the law, rather than additions to it, or retrenchments of it. But if the Lord suffered no enlargement or diminution of the ministry of Moses, notwithstanding it was enveloped in such great obscurity, till he dispensed a clearer doctrine by his servants the prophets, and finally by his beloved Son; why do we not consider ourselves far more severely prohibited from making any addition to the law, the prophets, the psalms, and the gospel? No change has taken place

in the Lord, who long ago declared that nothing was so highly offensive to him, as to attempt to worship him with the inventions of men. Hence those striking declarations in the prophets, which ought to be continually sounding in our ears: 'I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices; but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you.' Again, 'I earnestly protested unto your fathers, saying, Obey my voice.' There are many other similar passages, but the most remarkable of all is the following: 'Hath the Lord,' says Samuel, 'as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.' Therefore, whatever human inventions relating to the worship of God, may be defended by the authority of the Church, since it is impossible to vindicate them from impiety, it is easy to infer that the imputation of them to the Church, has no foundation in truth."

"XXIV. Many persons wonder why the Lord so severely threatened that he would 'do a marvellous work among the people,' whose 'fear toward him' was 'taught by the precepts of men,' and pronounces that he is 'worshipped in vain' by 'the commandments of men.' But if such persons would consider what it is to follow the word of God *alone* in matters of religion, that is, of heavenly wisdom, they would immediately perceive it to be for no trivial reason that the Lord abominates such corrupt services, which are rendered to him according to the caprice of the human mind. For though persons who obey such laws for the worship of God, have a certain appearance of humility in this their obedience, yet they are very far from being humble before God, to whom they prescribe the same laws which they observe themselves. This is the reason why Paul requires us to be so particularly cautious against being deceived by the traditions of men, and will-worship, that is voluntary worship, invented by men without the word of God. And so indeed it is, that our own wisdom, and that of all other men, must become folly in our esteem, that we may allow God alone to be truly wise. This is very far from being the case with those who study to render themselves acceptable to him by petty observances of human contrivance, and obtrude upon him, in opposition to his commands, a hypocritical obedience, which in reality is rendered to men. This was the conduct of men in former ages; the same has happened within our own remembrance, and still happens in those places where the authority of the creature is more regarded than that of the Creator; where religion, if religion it deserves to be called, is polluted with more numerous and senseless superstitions than ever disgraced the worship of paganism. For what could proceed from the minds of men, but things carnal, foolish, and truly expressive of their authors?"

FALSE STANDARDS OCCASION FALSE ESTIMATES.

MANKIND, in their commercial dealings, are often defrauded by the use of false balances, weights and measures. In the concerns of religion, standards are used for estimating the characters and actions of men. Here, as well as in commerce, there may be false standards by which men may deceive, and be deceived. By adopting a false standard, the people of one sect may overrate their own worth, and undervalue the worth of people of other sects. It hence becomes a serious question, whether false standards are not in use at the present day? and whether these are not the occasion of much censorious judging, as well as of self-deception?

Ever since Christians were divided into sects, creeds or confessions of faith have been set up as standards of character, or tests of moral worth. That many of these standards have been false, may be obvious from the following considerations:

1. In all the creed-making sects, each sect has a standard of its own, which is different, and in some particulars, often directly opposite to that of another sect. Of course there must be a false standard with one or the other, and perhaps with both of the two clashing sects.

2. It is a known fact, that the creed of a sect may become so changed in a course of years, that what was once deemed essential, is afterwards deemed erroneous; still the sect may retain its distinctive name.

3. All party standards are formed by substituting the inferences or explanations of fallible men for the language of the inspired writers: and these tests, formed in the words of man's wisdom, are preferred to the language of the Bible, and are passed as a substitute for the word of God.

silver and gold. Is there nothing in this, of too near an approach to self-sufficiency and self-exaltation?

5. So far as articles of faith are made a test of character in the New Testament, they are the following:

That Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God; and
That God raised him from the dead.

A belief in the first of these articles, was the test of discipleship during the ministry of Christ. After his crucifixion, a belief in his resurrection became necessary to a belief that he was the Messiah. Hence a belief in the second article was required, as added by the apostles. Accordingly Paul, in stating the faith required, said, "That is the word of faith which we preach—that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." John, in stating the object for which he wrote his gospel, said, "These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name." To persuade people to believe the two articles which have been named, was the great object of the sermons recorded in the Acts of the apostles. These, if I mistake not, are the only articles of faith, a belief of which is spoken of in the New Testament as necessary to the Christian character, or as connected with regeneration, pardon, or eternal life.

A cordial belief in these articles naturally led to obedience to the precepts of Christ, and these are the appointed *standard* or *test* of moral character. Avowing a belief in Jesus as the Messiah, appears to have given such satisfaction to the apostles, that, on such a profession, 3,000 persons were admitted as converts or believers on the day of pentecost, the very day on which their profession was made. To be a disciple of Christ, then, meant to be a pupil or learner in his school. For admission to this school, or the church of Christ, no articles of faith were proposed as terms, but the two which have been mentioned. We are not, however, to suppose that nothing was required of disciples but a belief in these articles; nor that Christ instituted no other test of moral character. As the followers of Jesus were then a persecuted people, to acknowledge him as the Messiah under such circumstances, afforded much evidence of integrity of heart; and when a person made this profession, he implicitly professed a desire to come under the guidance of Christ, and a willingness to conform to his precepts and example. Henceforth the precepts of Christ were to be regarded by him as the rule of duty, and the test of Christian character. That this is a correct view of the subject, may appear from the following passages:

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that *doeth the will of my Father* who is in heaven." Mat. vii. 21. "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and *doeth them*, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house upon a rock." v. 27. "And whosoever does not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Luke xiv. 27. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." John xiv. 21. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." John xv. 10. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." v. 12. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." v. 14. "Hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Besides these plain declarations, as to the proper standard of Christian character, we are assured both by Christ and his apostles, that works of obedience will be rewarded at the final account, and that works of disobedience will be punished. But where shall we find in the bible the least evidence, that any man will be rewarded or accepted on account of his belief of such doctrines as are, at this day, made the test of Christian character? I know not; and I suspect that, after due examination, every honest man will be able to say the same.

After all we have done by means of the above documents, to afford a clear, precise, definite, satisfactory exhibit of the proposed reformation, some, perhaps, will still complain, that we have not been sufficiently explicit, because we have not given a detailed account of the various errors and corruptions in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, which ought to be reformed; nor yet of the deficiencies that ought to be supplied, in order to the restoration of the christian religion to its primitive constitutional purity in faith and practice. Such complainants ought to consider, that to have given a complete detail of all the existing errors and corrup-

tions of Christianity, would have required more time, talent and paper than we had at our disposal; or, than they could appropriate to such a purpose, were the necessary documents presented in due form. But, who ever imagined, that in order to ascertain the truth upon any subject, a statement or refutation of all possible or actual mistakes respecting it, was necessary. We suppose no one ever thought such a thing. All that can be required as necessary to accomplish and secure the proposed reformation, we think we have precisely stated; for what should it be, but an exact conformity in all things to the divine standard of faith and practice. True, says the objector, did all understand it alike, our divisions, with their causes, might thus soon be terminated, or rather, had never existed. What then! shall the cause of reformation be abandoned or postponed, till all understand and think alike about the meaning of the divine standard? If so, we presume it should never be attempted. Or, are the words and phrases of the holy scriptures, chosen by the revealing Spirit, less intelligible, and, of course, more liable to be misunderstood, than are those of human invention? Were they not sufficiently intelligible to the first Christians, and sufficiently understood by their successors for ages, to answer the purpose for which they were given? And, if so, why are they not so still? Have they lost their meaning through age, and so are become obsolete—a dead letter? Some, it appears, seem to think so, for they are heard to say so. But, how do these wise doctors know that their verbiage is not as liable to be misunderstood as the language of the holy apostles? Or, that the people that adopt their phraseology, are more uniform in their religious views and notions, than they would be if they used the phraseology of the holy scriptures? Did not the apostles mean to be understood? Did they not use great plainness of speech? Were they not under the guidance of the holy spirit? If, under this guidance, they labored to be understood, and missed it, we had better let it alone; for what can the man do that comes after an inspired apostle? Surely no better than that which has been already done. Thus are we thrown back again upon the original standard, as the only rational ground that can be assumed, for putting a legitimate and happy end to our heinous and destructive divisions. Adopting *this*, regulating ourselves by *it*, and conforming to *it* in word and deed—speaking as *it* speaks, and practising as *it* enjoins, we shall once more exhibit and enjoy the christian religion as it was originally exhibited and enjoyed. “The exhibition being made as formerly, not in the words which man’s wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, speaking spiritual things in spiritual words.” Thus will the enjoyment correspond with the testimony, being such as the belief of the divine testimony of the infinite mercy, condescension, and love of God manifested in Christ, is calculated to inspire. Thus filled with righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, by the belief of the divine testimony—with the law of Christ, which is the law of love, and the ordinances of gospel worship fairly before us, as prescribed in the sacred page, we shall find ourselves duly disposed and thoroughly furnished for all good works.

Upon the whole, we appeal to every candid mind, that has one serious thought upon the great subject of Christianity, is there any thing in all this reformation, for which we humbly plead, that should arouse the resentment and excite the universal hostility of the professing world? Is not the necessity of a religious reformation universally acknowledged by the serious of all denominations? We appeal, then, to all concerned, what should be its character? Should it be divine or human? Should it be the simple belief and obedience of the word and testimony of God, or of the opinions and dictates of men? You will, no doubt, say, of the former, and not of the latter. So say we; and so have we urged and proclaimed for upwards of twenty years, as appears by the above documents. And yet, strange to tell, all the sects are offended. And why? We shall leave it to them to say; for they have not yet, no not one of them, presented any relevant reason, why we should desist from urging the indispensable duty, absolute necessity, and vast importance of the reformation for which we plead. They have not presented us with the detection of one single error in our premises, though subjected to their inspection for the whole of the term above specified. We shall take leave of this subject, and of the public for the present, by respectfully assuring all concerned, that if they; or any of them, will convince us of inculcating any error, either of faith or practice, that we shall candidly relinquish it, and thank God and man for the discovery. Also, that if they will shew us how we may, without giving offence, plead the cause of a reformation, which involves the glory of God and the happiness of mankind, we shall thankfully adopt it. FAREWELL.